



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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Burmaster moves forward on international education agenda

MADISON—Continuing her initiative to strengthen and expand international education in Wisconsin schools, State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster has signed cooperative education agreements with the ministries of education in Thailand, France, and Germany. These agreements establish and promote international education programs that will impact thousands of Wisconsin teachers and students in the coming years.

On Aug. 2, Burmaster and Khunying Kasama Varavarn, permanent secretary of the Thai Ministry of Education, signed a Framework of Cooperation that will connect teachers and students in Thailand to schools in Wisconsin. The signing took place during DPI's Fulbright Seminar, a five-week study tour to Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The event was attended by officials from the Thai Ministry of Education, University of Wisconsin and Fulbright alumni, a delegation from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and 18 educators from Wisconsin PK-16 institutions who participated in the Fulbright seminar.

"This document will help create an ongoing connection to their native language, culture, and traditions for the increasing numbers of Wisconsin students of Southeast Asian heritage," said Burmaster, "as well as promote understanding among all our teachers and students about other world economic, political, and social systems."

In June, Burmaster renewed a Memorandum of Understanding with Wisconsin's sister state of Hessen, Germany. Burmaster met with Minister President Roland Koch and Education Secretary Karin Wolff in Hessen to strengthen the 29-year-old partnership as sister states. This document pledges continued DPI efforts to support the exchange program for teachers and students focusing on language studies and emerging topics in international education. In addition, Wisconsin Technical College System campuses will set up internships with international companies in Hessen and in Wisconsin.

(more)

“The success of U.S.-German relationships largely depends on international education efforts and language learning in public schools,” said Burmaster. “Students will learn about each other through shared cultural, language, and educational experiences.”

In May, Burmaster established new student and teacher exchanges with France. In Madison, Burmaster and French Ambassador to the United States Jean-David Levitte signed a memorandum to establish programs connecting Wisconsin and French schools through school pairings, student/educator exchange programs, summer seminars, French language accreditation, administrator exchanges, and visiting teacher programs.

Wisconsin’s education exchanges with Japan also continue to expand. Currently, more than 3,000 students are enrolled in Japanese language classes in Wisconsin’s elementary, middle, or high schools. Japan’s Ministry of Education will send 13 teachers to teach cultural units in 30 Wisconsin schools this fall. Wisconsin will send two teachers to Japan to join five currently teaching there in the Chiba-Wisconsin Assistant Language Teacher program. This program has maintained assistant English teachers in Chiba Prefecture since 1991.

Advocacy for world language programs and student and teacher exchanges are among the recommendations of the statewide International Education Council, formed by the state superintendent and Gov. Jim Doyle, which Burmaster chairs.

For more information on any of the above programs, contact Madeline Urameck (608) 267-2278, or Paul Sandroek (608) 266-3079 at DPI in Madison.

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